CEMVP-ED-H 14 February 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operation Plan Evaluation (ROPE), Hydropower and Downstream Users Task Force, Meeting Minutes for October 28, 2002

1. The first meeting of the Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operation Plan Evaluation (ROPE), Hydropower and Downstream Users Task Force, was held on Monday, 28 October 2002. The meeting was conducted at the Corps of Engineers Gull Lake Recreation Area office at 11:00 AM. Invitations were sent to 24 organizations (see Enclosure No. 1). Sixteen invitees attended representing 14 organizations (see Enclosure No. 2).

2. I presented information on the ROPE and the role the Task Force will play during the course of the study (see meeting handouts, Enclosure No. 3). If the ROPE proposes a change in the flow regime from the reservoirs, the group requested that the following information be considered:

a. The 7Q10 flow in the downstream rivers will have to be evaluated in light of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for wastewater treatment plants. The "7Q10" flow is the minimum flow averaged over 7 consecutive days that is expected to occur, on average, once in any 10-year period. The 7Q10 has a 10-percent chance of occurring in any given year. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) NPDES permits for wastewater treatment plants are tied to the 7Q10 flow of the receiving river (for plants that discharge more than 1 million gallons per day). If a change in the current Water Control Plan is proposed, the ROPE may need to assess the potential changes to the 7Q10 flow at a particular location, and in turn the economic impacts on the wastewater treatment plants. Due to the statistical nature of a 7Q10 flow, this may require a period-of-record modeling analysis.

b. The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires States to adopt water quality standards to protect the Nation's waters. The standards define how much of a pollutant there can be in a surface water/groundwater while still allowing it to meet its designated uses (swimming, fishing, drinking, etc.). For each pollutant that fails to meet the standard, the CWA requires the MPCA to conduct a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study. The MPCA is currently in the process of conducting TMDL studies for various reaches of river in the ROPE study area. If a change in the current Water Control Plan is proposed, the ROPE will need to evaluate the potential changes to the TMDL in the affected rivers.

c. The Corps' September 1994 Section 22 report titled "*Water Available from the Mississippi River at Minneapolis and other Upstream Locations during Low-Flow Conditions*" contains tools for routing and attenuating reservoir releases to downstream locations during low-flow conditions (e.g., if you release 500 cubic feet per second (cfs), how much reaches Anoka?). However, the report does not contain any recommendations on whether or not the Headwaters Reservoirs can/should be used for flow augmentation during low-flow/drought conditions. The ROPE study should expand on this report by examining the implications of a 500- to 1,000-year drought event on water resources as far south as the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The ROPE should recommend whether low-flow augmentation should remain a Federal purpose and, if so, better define the Corps' decision-making process for releasing emergency supplemental flows. In turn, the ROPE should define the volume of water physically available from the six reservoirs, and how much and how long flow in the river could actually be augmented at critical points to include the Twin Cities.

The City of Minneapolis' water supply intake is upstream of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. The city is 100 percent dependent on getting its water supply from the Mississippi River. Tapping groundwater reserves is not an option for the city, as it would adversely affect other wells in the region.

Various steam generation and nuclear power plants use river water for cooling purposes (e.g., Boswell, Sherburne, Monticello). Low flows or high water temperatures in the river can limit the amount of water that can be withdrawn and therefore limit the amount of power than can be generated. This can be critical for the Twin Cities area in the summer because, under adverse circumstances, Xcel Energy may not be able to purchase and/or receive enough power from other sources to offset the loss of key generating units forced to shut down due to lack of cooling water. In a worst case scenario, blackouts could occur.

d. The hydropower plants at Grand Rapids (Blandin), Brainerd (Potlatch), Little Falls, Sylvan, Royalton (Blanchard), Sartell (Intl. Paper), St. Cloud, Minneapolis (Xcel), and Lock/Dam No. 1 (Ford) depend, to varying degrees, on the increased flow duration that the reservoirs provide. This is particularly true during the normally low-flow winter months when the drawdown flows from the reservoirs can add as much as 2,700+ cfs to the river's base flow. Many of these sites pay the Federal Government for this increase in the river's flow duration as mandated by Section 10(f) of the Federal Hydropower Act. High flows during flooding conditions also have an adverse impact on power generation. If a change in the current Water Control Plan is proposed, the ROPE will need to evaluate the potential changes to the flow duration (high and low) at a particular location and, in turn, the economic impacts on the hydropower plants. Due to the statistical nature of flow duration, this may require a period-of-record modeling analysis.

The Ford hydropower plant was shut down for 5 weeks during the 2001 flood. A decrease in power generation at the Ford plant (which employs 2,300 people) can shut down the production line. The Minnesota Municipal Power Agency is considering a plan to reconstruct the hydropower plant at Coon Rapids Dam (the old power plant is gone). They will be invited to the next meeting.

e. Barton Sand and Gravel (Maple Grove, MN) does not withdraw water directly from the river. They have their own storage pond.

f. Miscellaneous: If a change in the current Water Control Plan is proposed, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Mississippi River System-Wide Low-Flow Plan may need to be reevaluated. Impacts on the whitewater park, the lock and dam operations, and the aesthetics of flow over the spillway at Upper St. Anthony Falls Dam should be considered. Higher flows in the river can result in more debris and increased erosion.

3. The ROPE matrix (see attached Enclosure 3, Part 3) should include line items for the aforementioned variables. The Task Force will meet again after the ROPE study team has completed the matrix and generated alternatives to the Water Control Plan.

4. Additional information on the ROPE study is available at **www.mvp.usace.army.mil/projectinfo/rope/**. If you have questions, you can contact me by telephone at 651-290-5623 or by email at kenton.e.spading@mvp02.usace.army.mil.

Encls
1. Invitation List
2. Attendance List
3. Agenda

KENTON E. SPADING, P.E.
Hydraulic Engineer
Water Control and Hydrology Section

CF:
PM-A/Edward McNally (w/Encl 1)
ED-H/James Murphy
ED-H/Dennis Holme
PM-E/Steven Clark

Enclosure No. 1

Invitation list to the initial Hydropower and Downstream Water Users Task Force meeting (October 28, 2002) as part of the Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operation Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Study.

1. Minnesota Power Company

a. John Niemela
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b. Jim Uzelac
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2. George Ketchum
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3. Ken Gallant
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4. Ken Robinson
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5. Tim Marr
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6. Xcel Energy

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b. Dan Orr
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7. Tom Griffin
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8. Brad Bystrom
Plant Engineering Supervisor
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9. Wayne Hanson
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10. Mike Caron
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11. City of Aitkin

a. Tom Klingelhofer
Supervisor, Waste Water Treatment Plant
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b. Chuck Tibbetts
Manager, Aitkin Public Utilities Commission
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ctibpuc@mlecmn.net

c. Murv Mock
Aitkin Public Utilities Commission
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218-927-3222
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12. Mike Larson
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13. James Lilienthal
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14. Adam Kramer
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15. Bernie Bullert
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17. Gary Leirmoe
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19. City of Grand Rapids

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20. Kent Johnson
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21. Mel Sinn
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22. David Brostrom
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Enclosure No. 1

Enclosure No. 2

Attendance List/Organization/Email Address
Reservoir Operation Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Meeting, October 28, 2002
Hydropower and Downstream Users Task Force

Kenton Spading, Chairman, U.S. Army Corps of Eng., St. Paul, MN, Spading@usace.army.mil
Gregg Struss, Gull L. Dam, Army Corps of Eng., Brainerd, MN, gregg.a.struss@mvp02.usace.army.mil

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Jim Hodgson, MN Pollution Control Agency, Brainerd, MN, james.hodgson@pca.state.mn.us
Mel Sinn, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, St. Paul, MN, mel.sinn@dnr.state.mn.us

Enclosure No. 2

Enclosure No. 3

Monday, October 28, 2002
Subject: Initial Hydropower and Downstream Water Users Task Force
RE: Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Studies

A G E N D A

Welcome and Introductions

Name, organization you represent, something about yourself or your organization

Overview and status of the ROPE

Overview of scope, schedule, budgets, processes for this Study
(See Parts 1 and 2 of the meeting handouts)
Discuss Decision Matrix *(See Part 3 of the meeting handouts)*

Explain and discuss the roles of this Group and others being formed

Overview of the Groups being formed and the roles of each Group
(See Parts 4 and 5 of the meeting handouts)

Task Force Discussion

a. Potential changes in the flow regime of the rivers.
b. What will you and the Task Force be asked to do?
   (i.e., What are the potential econ impacts to your organization?)
c. Which hydropower users does Section 10(f) of the Federal Hydropower Act affect?
d. Are diverse interests represented?
e. Are key interests missing? If so, how can the group get a representative from that group to volunteer?

Organize and Mobilize this Task Force

Review and discuss the Ground Rules and Meeting Procedures.
Determine who will lead as Master of Ceremonies (suggest co-leadership).
Determine where, when and how often the Task Force should meet.
Determine who will record a short summary of minutes of each meeting.

General Open Discussions – (Focus on organizing the group -- as time permits)
Summary and Open Discussions – (Focus on organizing the group as time permits)
Adjourn

Enclosure No. 3, Part 1

Reservoir Operating Plan Evaluation (ROPE)
A Study for the Mississippi Headwaters

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service are embarking on a jointly sponsored, long-range reservoir operating plan study for the Mississippi River Headwaters reservoirs. This study is called the Reservoir Operating Plan Evaluation, or ROPE. The primary purpose of the study is to evaluate alternative plans for each of the existing reservoirs and try to improve systemwide operations of the Mississippi Headwaters Reservoirs system. Consideration will be given to tribal trust, flood control, environmental concerns, water quality, water supply, recreation, navigation, hydropower, and other public interests when evaluating alternatives. Some possible outcomes could be lake level changes, winter drawdown changes, restoration of some sections of river systems, a more natural flow release for downstream river reaches and, in some lake areas, changes in flood control concerns for differing sections of the total system and possibly even the purchase of some land for maximizing efficient operation. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Otter Tail Power and Minnesota Power are collaborating headwaters dam operators included in this planning effort and are helping to evaluate and recommend a systemwide operational plan for the headwaters reservoirs. The Mississippi Headwaters Board and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe also play important roles in this study by helping to coordinate and evaluate alternative plans from the regional perspective. The study began in December 2001 and will continue for the next 4 years.

The study process used for the ROPE relies heavily on interagency and public groups to assist in the plan formulation. Accordingly, there are numerous interagency task forces and local lake groups, and these volunteer groups will meet periodically to provide technical and public inputs and perspective. The general public will also be kept informed and involved in the study and will be asked to review a number of preliminary reports as alternatives are formulated and evaluated. In addition, there could be other spin-off projects and beneficial activities in the headwaters area as a result of this study process.

You can become involved in this study. You can volunteer to be a member of a lake group or just take some time to learn more about the operations of the Headwaters dams. Much more information is available at any of the Headwaters Corps of Engineers field offices or at the web site for this study located on the Internet at:

http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/project_info/rope/

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the follow offices:

Leech Lake Dam	*218/654-3145*
Pine River Dam	*218/692-2025*
Gull Lake Dam	*218/829-2797*
Pokegama and Winnibigoshish Dams	*218/326-6128*
Knutson Dam	*218/335-8651*
Stump Lake Dam	*218/751-3120*

Enclosure No. 3, Part 2

Excerpts From
QUALITY CONTROL PLAN
Upper Mississippi River (UMR) Headwaters Reservoirs Project

PRODUCT SCHEDULES/MILESTONES:

The milestone schedule for completing all aspects of this Quality Control Plan (QCP) are shown as follows (**note**: these milestone dates are tentative and are likely to change as the study evolves and as funding available each year is solidified):

Complete the initial series of agency and public workshops	Nov 2001
Complete Delivery Team Prel. scoping work	Dec 2001
Coordinate Revised QCP within District and with Steering Com.	Jan 2002
Conduct initial Partnering Charter Meetings	Feb 2002
Conduct the initial Task Force Meetings	May 2002
Conduct the initial Lake Forum Meetings	June 2002
Complete EIS Scoping	Aug 2002
Coordinate and identify resource/data inventory needs	Sept 2002
Initiate required surveys/inventories	Nov 2002
Complete Hydraulic baseline models	May 2003
Conduct Partnering Group Evaluations Meeting/Screening	June 2003
Complete Preliminary Screening Report and EIS	Aug 2003
Conduct Public/interagency Meetings RE: Screening Report	Sept 2003
Integrate review comments & refine evaluations of best alternatives	Nov 2003
Define a selected plan and fully coordinate with task force and Lake Forums and Partner Charter Committee	May 2004
Conduct Partnering Group Evaluations to define "best plans"	June 2004
Complete Draft ROPE, EIS, and Programmatic Agreements	July 2004
Conduct Public Meetings and mediation session/s RE: Draft	Aug 2004
Integrate review inputs into formulation and report documents	May 2005
Complete Final ROPE, EIS, PA (mitigation and record of decision)	June 2005

End

Enclosure No. 3, Part 3

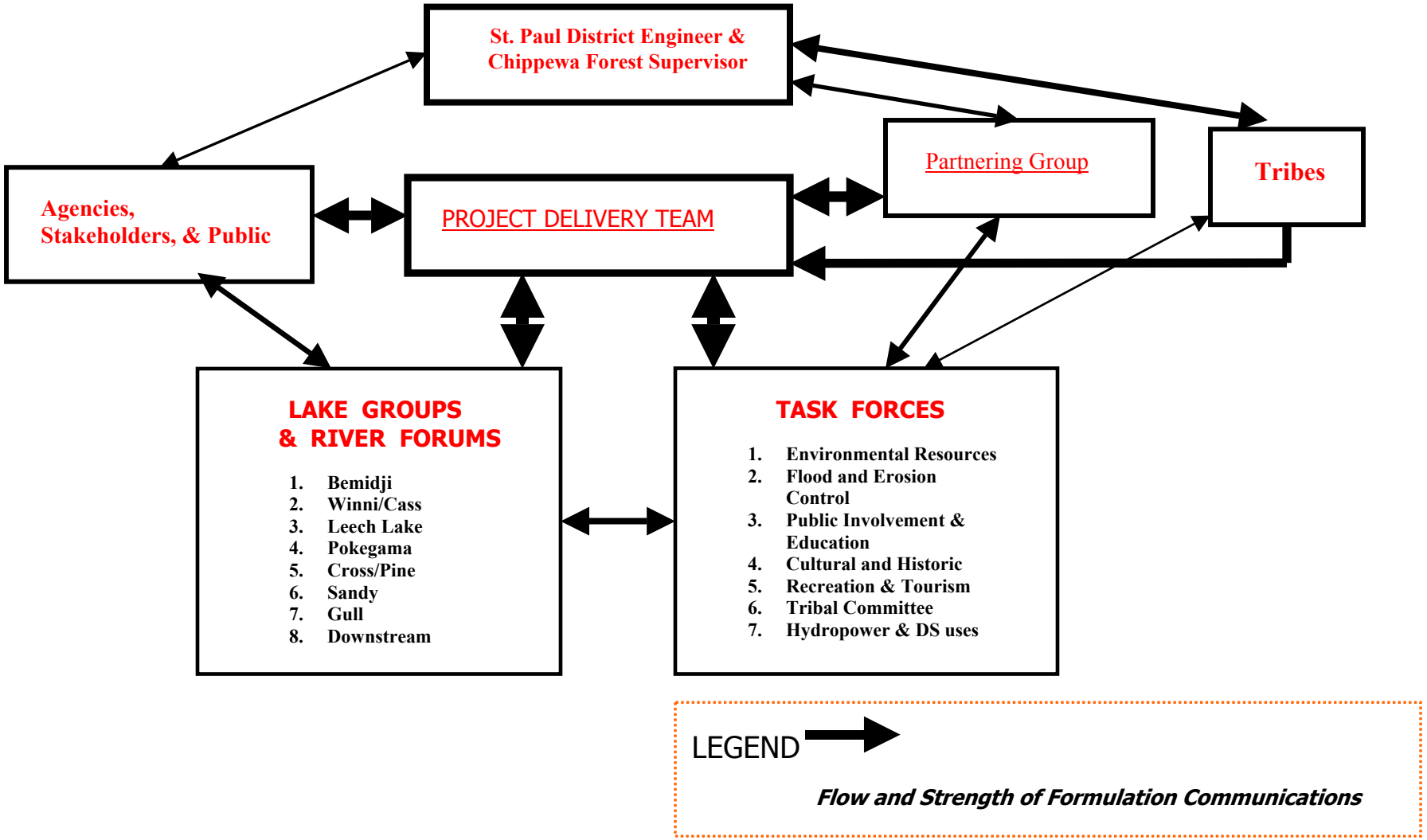
Matrix Evaluations

Simplified Sample

(NOTE: It will actually be much more comprehensive)

Outputs	Affects +/-	Remarks
Tribal Interests		
Trust Resources		
Environmental		
Water Quality		
Habitat		
Cultural Resources		
Recreation		
National		
Local/Regional		
Flood Control		
National		
Local/Regional		
Navigation & Other		

Enclosure No. 3, Part 4



Enclosure No. 3, Part 5

STUDY COORDINATION PROCESS/WEB:

The planned coordination associated with formulation of the ROPE is to be accomplished via a number of "coordination groups" with varying roles and responsibilities and will involve extensive public involvement and an education program. The membership and roles of each group will evolve as the process unfolds. However, a table that summarizes aspects of these coordination groups follows:

Coordination Groups	*Key Members of Each Group*	*Purposes and Roles of Groups*	*Relationships with other Groups and Remarks*
Partnering Group	Upper management Reps from prime local, State, Tribal, Federal agencies, and other key stakeholders.	**Provides general study oversight** and review, priority for funding, and resolves policy issues.	Will provide the Corps District Engineer and US Forest Service Director with common ground recommendations and high level agency and stakeholder positions.
Tribal Interests Group	Reps from Leech, Mille Lacs/Sandy Lake Bands of the Ojibwe Tribe/nation, Dakota Bands, and Corps and Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives.	To provide **technical inputs regarding tribal interests** into evaluation matrix and review comments.	Works closely with the Corps PM/Operations PM/District Engineer and USFS reps to establish a constructive nation-to-nation dialogue and avoid tribal trust conflicts.
Downstream Interests Group	Diverse group of interested citizens and officials from Lake Pokegama to the Twin Cities and inclusive of interests at Fort Ripley, Aitkin, and other downstream urban areas. Needs to be inclusive of environmental and sportsman groups interested in the river habitats. Also, need to include irrigation interests in the downstream reaches of the study area.	Provides **non-technical inputs regarding downstream effects** into the evaluation matrix and for use in the EIS. Review study reports from the downstream public's perspective.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team downstream interests champion/s.
Task Force Groups			
Environmental/Natural Resources	Reps from variety of natural resources agencies and environmental groups (Key reps will include DNR, COE, and USFS, Tribes, MHB, and Environmental Group representatives, etc).	To **provide technical inputs regarding environmental matters** into the EIS, evaluation matrix, to help collect relevant environmental inventories and set technical evaluation criteria, review reports, and identify environmental issues and opportunities.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team environmental champion.
Flood Control/Erosion Control	Reps to include City of Aitkin, MHB, various lake association reps, USFS reps, MDNR, Fifty Lakes Association, Star Island Association, and Corps engineering and PM.	To **provide technical flood reduction and erosion protection inputs** into the evaluation matrix, and report reviews regarding environmental issues and opportunities.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team environmental champion and with the public involvement and education task force.

Public Involvement/Education	Reps include reps from Audubon Society, MHB, Corps PAO, Corps PM and Operations Manager, and USFS reps.	Helps develop and implement the Public Involvement program. Assists Delivery Team and associated group champions with logistics of media and public releases/notices and newsletters.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team environmental champion. Support study awareness and education efforts through the lake groups and various media.
Hydropower & Downstream Uses	Reps include Otter Tail Power, Minnesota Power, MDNR, Aitkin officials, MPCA, MHB, and Corps engineering and operations champions and Forest Service reps.	To provide technical inputs into the evaluation matrix and EIS. Review reports from downstream perspective.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team downstream interests champion and hydropower and water supply representatives. Interfaces with the public involvement task force to educate and inform downstream users.
Cultural/Historic Preservation	Reps will include the Minnesota SHPO, tribal preservation officers, and Corps and USFS cultural reps.	Develop baseline data for cultural effects evaluation for input into matrix and EIS, review of reports.	Works closely with the Tribal interests group and the Corps and USFS cultural reps.
Recreation and Tourism	Reps will include Minnesota Planning and DNR, University of Minnesota reps, regional tourism groups, and Corps and USFS reps.	Develop baseline data for recreation and tourism effects evaluation for input into matrix and EIS, review of reports.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team recreation champion. Interfaces with the public involvement task force to educate and inform downstream users.
Lake Groups			
Leech Lake Chain	Diverse group of local interests representing users of the lake (includes representatives from Lake Association, chambers of commerce, sportsman groups, resorts, lakeshore owners, immediate downstream river users, other local stakeholders, and interested local citizens).	Forum for **non-technical inputs regarding lake chain effects** into the evaluation matrix and for use in the EIS. Acts as a means of communicating information to public regarding ongoing study progress. Review study reports from the local public's perspective.	Works closely with the study delivery team through the Corps park manager and/or USFS representatives and with the public involvement and education task force to assist with distribution of newsletters and media announcements.
Winnibigoshish/Cass Lake Chain	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*
Sandy Lake Chain	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*
Pokegama Lake Chain	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*
Cross Lake Chain	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*
Gull Lake Chain	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*	*Same as Leech Chain above*
Lake Bemidji	*Same as Leech Chain above*	***Same as Leech Chain above except that Otter Tail Power representatives will need to assist in coordination associated with this group.***	***Same as Leech Chain above except that Otter Tail Power representatives will need to be coordinating much of this effort.***
Project Delivery Team	Representatives from a number of functional offices in the St. Paul District Corps will serve on this team (see the complete list of team members in this QCP). In addition, non-Corps representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, MDNR, Tribal interests, MHB, Audubon Society, etc., will serve on this working team.	Is responsible for data collection, evaluation, assessment, plan formulations, and documentation of the ROPE and the associated EIS. This group works together to evaluate, screen, and select alternative operation plans. It then provides recommendations to the St. Paul District Engineer and the USFS Forest Director for their approval.	This working group will provide leadership and guidance to the various Lake Groups and Task Forces and will receive inputs from those groups for incorporation into the evaluation matrix and use this in the plan formulations and impact assessments. With assistance of the Public Involvement Task Force, will maintain an up-to-date web page for ROPE activities and announcements.